

The

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## Rajiv Gandhi's Punjab Visit Ends Without Any Dramatic Announcement

### Battle Against Extremism Cannot Be Fought Without Concessions On Political Front

Those, who were looking forward to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi opening the doors a little ajar, not to speak of floodgates, toward peace in Punjab have been sorely disappointed with his one-day visit on September 21, after a gap of three years.

No dramatic declarations like general amnesty, solid steps to punish the guilty of anti-Sikh November 1984 riots, merger of Chandigarh with Punjab, and

more equitable distribution of Ravi-Beas waters, were made. He merely indulged in parables and hyperboles which cannot, and do not, take the Punjab any nearer

to the era of peace and plenty.

On the eve of his visit, the centre did announce its resolve to release 138 more Jodhpur detainees. But 189 will continue to rot there without trial for how long more god knows. New Delhi cleared the Pepsi-cola project which had been gathering dust in its murky corridors for more than two years. The Reserve Bank announced a series of

credit relaxations to industries in Punjab and extended existing concessions till March 31, 1990. But these palliatives cannot improve the situation.

The credibility of the central government in eyes of Punjab has touched its nadir. There is a high tide of cynicism, disbelief and desperation. Mr Gandhi's words are taken, not with the

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## Unruly Mobs Indulge In Carnage And Pillage Of Sikhs At Bidar In Karnatka

### Instigated Violence "Reopen Wounds Inflicted In November 1984"

The madness, which had gripped Congress(I) men and their hired hoodlums and lumpens in November 1984 and which led to the killing of several thousand innocent Sikh men, women and children and plunder and reduction to rubble of property was witnessed, though on minor scale, on September 14 and 15 in the Karnataka town of Bidar.

On these crucial days, mobs of bigotted Hindus went on the rampage. They killed at least six Sikh boys, grievously wounded several hundred others, tried to burn the huge building of Guru Nanak Dev engineering college and its hostel to ashes, attacked the historic gurdwara, looted dozens of shops belonging to Sikhs, and set Sikh houses on fire. The students are now taking refuge in the gurdwara.

Above all, the local police stood by as a silent and inactive spectator. It made a show of moving in only after the mischief had been done to the full satisfaction of the marauders.

In November 1984, the criminals could have some excuse that the prime minister of the country had been gunned down by two Sikhs though the entire community could not be held responsible for the crime of two misguided men.

But in Bidar the ire of the majority Hindu community was aroused because of a totally unreasonable demand. Sponsors of the Ganesh Utsav demanded that students of Guru Nanak Dev engineering college donate Rs 400 each and of the neighbouring polytechnic Rs 300 each to the celebration fund. When the students expressed their inability

to dish out such huge amounts out of their paltry pocket money, the Hindu bigots flew into fury and decided to teach the Sikhs a lesson.

Little did they realise that donations to a religious celebration have to be, of necessity, purely voluntary. These must not be forced out of others, especially when the latter belong to another religious faith. Lord Ganesh had always been upholder of justice and dispenser of kindness to the under-privileged. Using the sacred occasion of the Lord's birthday for such heinous crimes is an insult to the god they wanted to revere.

This was also height of ingratitude. Because both the engineering college and the polytechnic have been a boon to the students of Karnatka who could not get admission elsewhere. The proposed medical college, likewise, would be an asset to the area but it has annoyed the local BJP

activists, as they wanted to corner this college for themselves.

Moreover, these institutions are in memory of the first Guru of Sikhs who during his visit to the area, had produced a spring of sweet potable water in that drought-prone area. This visit is immortalised by the spot called Nanak Jhira.

It could be that the Bidar Hindus are jealous of comparative prosperity of local Sikhs. Then the solution lies in the Hindus working harder than in bludgeoning people, who have brought economic health to the area, into fight, ruin or death. They also demand that only "sons of the soil" be admitted to the educational institutions run by Sikhs and not "outsiders."

There has been widespread resentment among Sikhs outside Karnatka. Numerous colleges in Punjab closed down on September 20. Akali leaders have issued very

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proverbial pinch of salt but with collar of salt. He is regarded as the worst mountebank who saws the air with words but does nothing on the ground level.

The welcome arches, bunting and manipulated crowds were no barometer of his popularity.

The only new thing, which he uttered, is his offer to call an all-party meeting to solve the Punjab tangle. But only recently he had decreed that such a meeting could serve no purpose, though all opposition leaders had been clamouring for it.

Why this sudden change of mind, if not volte face?

Maybe he had to ditch out toll-pops, as he could not afford to face the charge that he went there with empty pockets. Cynics take it as a trick to put off the solution.

What is there to discuss?

The Punjab problem has been thrashed out threadbare umpteen times. The malaise has been analysed fully. Now only the remedies have to be applied. For this Mr Gandhi is not ready.

He paid tributes to Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and said after his sad demise, no leader of his stature and integrity had been thrown up by the state.

But what regret has he shown for that noble soul?

As sole surviving signatory of the Rajiv-Longowal accord of July 24, 1985, it was Mr Gandhi's duty to implement it in toto. But not even one clause of it has been fully honoured. The Sant's supreme sacrifice has gone waste.

Punjab is these days a blood-stained and badly bruised state. The psyche of both Hindus and Sikhs has been wounded beyond recognition. If the two communities have lived like brothers, sharing weals and woes together, it is due to their own sense of fraternity, common heritage and shared future. The government cannot take credit for it. Some allege that it has been using its agents provocateurs to ignite Hindu-Sikh clashes. But they have succeeded in making Sikhs fight among themselves.

If the prime minister had gone to the Golden Temple to pay obeisance, if not to apologise for the past sins and blunders, the Sikhs would have felt that some balm has been applied to their lacerated hearts. But it was not to be.

The timing of Mr Gandhi's visit was not ideal. Only on September 19, two days before, BJP leader H. D. Dethlefsen had been gunned down in Chandigarh by extremists, and Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh and some towns in Jammu and Kashmir had observed burial on September 20.

Also Punjabis, especially Sikhs, were emotionally upset

over the incidents in far-away Karnataka town of Bidar where students and traders from Punjab have been at the receiving end of mob fury and communal assault. But Mr Gandhi did not express a word of sympathy for the victims.

Mr Gandhi had earlier thrown down the advantages produced by Operation Black Thunder. The extremists were then a defeated lot among Sikhs, partly due to the sacrilege they had committed within the Golden Temple and partly due to the cowardice they betrayed by surrendering with arms raised. If Mr Gandhi had displayed some political acumen and statesmanship and taken some positive steps towards the resolution of the Punjab problem, the impact would have been tremendous and dividends enormously rewarding. But he missed the bus, as he did not capitalise on the psychological sea-change among Sikh masses then.

He should realise that militancy in Punjab is a consequence and not the cause of the Punjab problem. The fight against extremists and secessionists cannot be won without solid steps on the political front. And it is here that Mr Gandhi is marking time, with an eye on the next Lok Sabha elections. Somehow or other he was convinced himself that any concessions to Sikhs would be anathema to Hindu voters in other states. Having been discarded by minorities, he does not want to lose their vote bank. And there lies the main rub.

## Delhi Police Behaves In An Arbitrary Way Over Bomb Blasts

### Sad Tale Of Two Students Of Local Khalsa College

It is an oddity that whenever an act of extremist violence takes place in the Indian capital, no one is caught on the spot despite the "red alert" which has been on for the last several months.

But in order to 'show results', the police picks up boys at random, tortures them, and tries to make them confess to one crime or the other.

The latest example has been the case of two boys of Khalsa College (evening) at Dey Nagar. When bombs were found at two places on September 11, the police could not find the real culprit. So they swooped on these two boys, Kaka Joginder Singh, a student of B. Com., and Kaka Gajinder Singh, a student of B.A., and took them to the interrogation centre.

On September 13, some alleged CID officials approached the

college principal, Sardar S.S. Randhawa, and made some inquiries about the Gurm Gobind Singh study circle which has been set up recently. Eminent persons invited to its meetings to deliver discourses on morality and religion which is a healthy activity to mould the boys' character.

The next thing the principal knew was that the blind father of one of the boys, who is a sweeper in a gardener, approached him about his missing son. After persistent inquiries, with the police, the principal was informed that the boys had been taken away by the terrorist cell of the CID and if they were clean, they would be let off.

Surprisingly three other office-bearers of the study circle were untouched.

Sardar Randhawa is bitter at the way the CID whisked off these boys. Said he: "They should have talked to me. We have always cooperated with the police and at times have called them to keep an eye on undesirable elements in the college. But these two boys have never shown an iota of indiscipline and have never been involved in any undesirable activity."

To a question, Sardar Randhawa said: "It appears the boys have been singled out possibly to give the impression that the police are doing a good job after the bomb incidents."

Their only fault was that they used to perform 'path' (recitation of Gurbani) at the college. As if such an act of faith in one's religion automatically makes one an extremist. Or is membership of a study circle named after the Tenth Master an offence in itself?

These two boys were interrogated about their whereabouts when the bomb blasts took place. The police also tried to link them up with the victims of November 1984 anti-Sikh riots who had filed affidavits against some police officers. An autosiksha belonging to Kaka Joginder Singh's family had been burnt down during those riots.

After a few days the two boys were allowed to go home. But this shows how the police works in an arbitrary way.

#### NOTICE

There will be no issue of our paper dated 3rd October, 1988. The next issue will be our special Annual Number which will be out by 7th October. Readers may please note.



# Universal Brotherhood

By : Surjit Singh Gandhi

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## BHAI RODE'S ANTICS

Sikhs have always been accusing the government and the ruling party to sow seeds of divisions among them. But recent events have shown that we are our own biggest enemies. Throwing by the wayside the lofty ideals, which inspired Sikhs throughout their chequered history, our leaders are now bitten by the bug of self and power. This malaise is not confined to politicians alone, who can be excused for their craze, but also men of religion who strut about as true Sikhs and devout followers of the Great Gurus. We are not talking of village granthis or low-profile missionaries but of the persons who were till recently Jathedars of three Takhts in Punjab. Instead of bowing to the supremacy of SGPC and its decisions, they have decided to rise in revolt, challenge their dismissal, and occupy their lost positions by force.

The government is playing a dirty game by setting these priests at SGPC's throats. It had tried, though in vain, to prevent dismissal of the previous high priests led by Bhai Jasbir Singh Rode; subsequently Amritsar deputy commissioner and Punjab police director-general threatened SGPC executive members with arrest if New Delhi's wishes were not respected but the latter stood firm. Then the government played its trump card it released the sacked high priests immediately after Professor Darsbhai Singh Ragi was appointed by SGPC as Akal Takht Jathedar. As Bhai Rode is alleged to have reached an understanding with New Delhi rulers, he was expected to play their game, and he has not disappointed them.

Once outside prison, Bhai Rode maintained that he continued to be Akal Takht Jathedar, as he had been selected by a Sarbat Khalsa and could be removed only by another Sarbat Khalsa. Little did he realise that his appointment was made by SGPC and he had been drawing his salary and other perks from SGPC funds. Why did he not ask the militants, who imposed that Sarbat Khalsa on the people with the help of their guns, for his emoluments? He wanted his bread buttered on both sides. Now he has called another Sarbat Khalsa on Diwali, November 9, where he hopes to have another verdict in his favour. Under his instigation, Bhai Jaswant Singh has forcibly occupied the official residence of Jathedar of Takht Damdama Sahib and Bhai Shavinder Singh has usurped Jathedarship of Takht Keshgarh Sahib. Not to be left behind, Giani Pura Singh, sacked head priest of Harmandir Sahib, one morning went to sanatorium sanatorium, asked the granthi who was sitting by the Granth Sahib to move away, and yield place to him. Such a sacrilege has never been heard of before in more than 500 years of Sikh history.

Persons, who have their eyes only on money and seats of authority and who have given up Sikh ideals of self-abnegation and selfless service, have no right to have any place in Sikh hearts, much less occupy such exalted position.

The ideal of social equality is not the ultimate aim of the ethics of Sikhism. The equality may be maintained without feeling any affection or regard for the person who is held to be equal but such bare equality would not be enough because it does not conform to the ideal humanistic morality. Hence it is essential that it must be saturated with idea of spiritual unity of mankind. Thus the material content to the social ethics in Sikhism is provided from the same premise of spiritual unity which was used for pointing up human equality.

Guru Gobind Singh's ideas in this regard are very expressive. He says: "As out of a single fire millions of sparks arise, arise in separation but come together again when they fall back in the fire. As from a heap of dust, grains of dust swept up fill the air, and falling it fall in a heap of dust. As out of single stream countless waves rise up, and being water, fall back in the water again. So from God's form emerge alive and inanimate things and since they arise from him, they shall fall in Him again." The Guru in this statement asserts that everyone ought to treat everyone as a member of the same human brotherhood.

To lend support to this idea, Guru Arjan says, "Thou art our only father, we are all thy children." The same Guru is much pained at the attitude of 'otherness' on the part of people and he says: "Meeting with the Guru I have abandoned the sense of the other." In fact the Guru equates the meeting of the Guru with the demolition of the walls of the instinct of 'otherness'. The 'other' is not an 'other' but a co-sharer of the same source of emanation and a part of the same spiritual order. The universal brotherhood is thus linked together by bonds deeper than family or national affinities.

According to Professor Avtar Singh "The argument of the Guru seems to be that brotherhood is a reality but it is not visible because of the veil of ego or haumai (individuation). Once this partitioning veil is removed, the relationship should be visible clearly. As a matter of fact, the whole of social ethics of the Sikhs is oriented towards the demolition of this wall of separation, and the realisation of order and still wider identification is indicative of the progressive realization of the ideal.

The greatest hindrance to the realization of the ideal of universal brotherhood are slander and enmity. So far slander is concerned, the Gurus are profuse in their utterances against this evil. The Gurus regard "Nindah"

as the person who does not find peace here and hereafter. "Slandering others amounts to putting their filth into one's own mouth." Slanderer's fate is sealed for ever and he can never earn respect. Slanderer's friends are also undone, because he is considered 'a useless person for the people and is condemned to eternal bondage.' He cannot earn spiritual merit even if he pays visit to sacred places of pilgrimage. He is given no place in the presence of True Lord.

Slander, therefore, has been condemned both on spiritual as well as on social grounds. This evil causes mutual distrust and suspicion among the smaller social groups but may also poison the social relations among much large groups such as different relations. Social value of the slanderer is negative as he is not considered trustworthy. He is, in fact, a sick member of the society.

In one of Guru Arjan Dev's hymns, this negative role of slander is very beautifully crystallised. He says: "I have abandoned the companionship of ego and now the friend and the foe are alike to me." Viewed from this point of view, the conduct of slanderer is immoral and anti-social and definitely a great hurdle on the way to the universal brotherhood.

The second great hurdle on the way to the realization of the goal of universal brotherhood is the 'enmity' towards others. Enmity is the desire to cause harm and pain to others. Guru Arjan Sahib says: "Why to entertain enmity. God pervades everywhere." "It is the duty of everyone that the feeling of enmity should be eradicated." These utterances of the Guru lead us to the conclusion that enmity hinders the spiritual growth and does not allow one to realise God who pervades everywhere.

Bhai Gurdas discusses this evil on social level. He says: "It is common practice that men return good for good done unto them, but I am sacrifice unto those who return good even for evil or who are good and kind even to the evil doers." Thus persons are required not to retaliate to evil with evil but to return it with good. Only thus can a fellow being turned into enemy be won over. Even when evil has to be fought, it is to be done without any feeling of enmity towards the other person. "Love of one's enemy provides the solid test of whether one's love is a perfect love like God's or is restricted to those whom it is easy to love."

# 'ARDAS': The daily prayer of the Sikhs

By : Iskar Singh, New Delhi

The way of daily prayer of the Sikhs is a peculiar one. Hardly any other religious community of the world does this sort of prayer. The Sikhs with folded hands stand before their Guru, which is Guru Granth Sahib. This sacred volume contains altogether praises of one all-pervading formless God, who is common to all God-believing religions. The Sikh Gurus whose political sayings are included in this sacred volume keep back their own personalities with extreme humility. Their object is to preach the worship of the one Supreme God of all and in Ardas also the praying persons must keep their minds fixed on God. After every short part of the prayer, the leader of Ardas declares 'Say Wahiguru Wahiguru (God, God) and all repeat God's Name. In the whole prayer scores of times all utter loudly *Wahiguru Wahiguru* (God, God).

In Guru Granth Sahib several names of God are mentioned as all names are of the same one God, but 'Wahiguru' has been adopted in Sikhism and is used in Ardas also. Among the several names of God mentioned in Guru Granth Sahib one name therein is 'Bhagwant' which can lead to the word 'Bhagoti' also. Just after saying in the beginning of Ardas 'O' Supreme One Lord, may Thy victory prevail in the world' one stanza therein is from Guru Gobind Singh's Bani which contains the word Bhagoti. But this word 'Bhagoti' is from Hindu religious literature and is used in Markande Puran. Guru Gobind Singh, no doubt, used Hindu mythology for inculcating bravery in Hindus of that time who were suffering from great weaknesses to face the Muslim invasions from the West. But here in first stanza of Ardas, Guru Gobind Singh has said 'Pritham, Bhagoti' which means the 'Original Power' which creates all smaller powers including human beings and the whole universe. In Ardas Guru Gobind Singh definitely stresses the remembrance of One formless God which is repeatedly stressed in the main part of his Bani. Thereafter are remembered in Ardas all the Sikh Gurus by name and Saints of God (Bhagats) jointly, all of whom praised and worshipped One Supreme God, as is recorded in their Bani embodied in Guru Granth Sahib. Thereafter are remembered the 'Panj Piaras' the 'Five beloved ones' before even the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh and other martyrs who sacrificed their lives

for the sake of Dharma. This is so as the institution of Panj Piaras has highest significance after the Gurus themselves including Guru Granth Sahib representing their spiritual form.

Through this prayer of Ardas are craved several general demands on behalf of all Sikhs, but individual demands which are consistent with teachings embodied in Guru Granth Sahib, can also be craved in the common Ardas held in Gurdwaras. Here it is proposed to mention just a few general demands which are prayed to be granted. The first general demand is that all Khalsa Ji (Sarbat Khalsa) wherever they are, be granted Thy grace O Lord that they may have Wahiguru in their minds (Sarbat Khalsa Ji ko Wahiguru ahi naam). Then a similar demand is craved for all Sikhs including Sehjdharis that they may be granted the highest boon of remembering God's Name and also the boon of full keshas for sehjdharis. For all Sikhs (both 'Keshadhari and Sehjdharis) it is then demanded 'Victory of Dharma' and 'Victory of Panth' ('Dharam ka jai kar' and 'Panth ki jai'). The last general demand is prayed as 'Sarbat ka bhalla' or happiness and welfare of all human beings. At the end of Ardas it is loudly declared 'Wahiguru Ji ka Khalsa, Wahiguru Ji ki Fateh' which are words of greetings also for all Sikhs and mean 'The Khalsa is man of God and his job is to bring about victory of God in the world'.

Such 'Ardas' is for all Sikhs whether they are common Sikhs, leaders of Sikhs and even those who are being called militant Sikhs if they claim to profess Sikh religion. The general part of Ardas is the same for all. The important point which is included to be stressed here is, that whatever one demands from God through prayer the same should be with utmost sincerity. None should crave something but have in mind to do in practice something opposite to that. In Guru Granth Sahib the point is very well stressed that those who say something by words and have a different thing in their minds are unreliable sinful persons—(in man har mukh har te kadhe kachia).

If it is craved that all Sikhs (Sarbat Khalsa) may have remembrance of Wahiguru in their minds this means all those who are Sikhs should not indulge in any evil deeds as God is source of all goodness and virtue and His remembrance can never allow a Sikh to do any evil act.

Again if it is craved that victory should be of Dharma (Dharam ka jai kar) the persons making such prayer are duty bound to work for achieving victory of Dharma. Dharma is defined in Guru Granth Sahib and it is recorded that highest Dharma is 'Remembrance of God's Name and performance of noble deeds'—(Har ko Naam jap nirmal karam). Simply asking something from Almighty God but doing nothing to achieve the same is also unbefitting and hypocrisy for Sikhs. Further if welfare of all human beings (Sarbat ka bhalla) is craved with all solemnity through Ardas and the persons demanding such laudable boon, instead of helping and serving others, kill innocent persons and loot others' wealth surely he is committing a great sin and displeasing God to whom he had prayed.

Sikhism has a lofty broad-based philosophy, its Ardas is

Sikhism has a lofty broad-based philosophy, its Ardas is very good, its history is full of sacrifices by the Gurus as well as by the Sikhs to uphold Dharma and all good causes. But alas at the present time a very different picture of Sikhs is before the world.

Very good, its history is full of sacrifices by the Gurus as well as by the Sikhs to uphold Dharma and all good causes. But alas at the present time a very different picture of Sikhs is before the world. Why is this so and what is the root cause needs to be found out. Some Sikhs feeling this anomaly between what they should do and what they are doing, at least some of them, have been pondering over this important matter. They realized that the main root cause is the absence of a right leadership. In the Ardas the Panj Piaras and Sarbat Khalsa are significantly mentioned, but neither the leadership of Panj Piaras at the highest level has been constituted, nor any Sarbat Khalsa has been formed in a regular manner covering all Sikhs where ever they are in the world.

In 1977 on the occasion of fourth centenary celebrations of creation of Amritsar as a centre of all Sikhs, by Guru Ram Das Ji our fourth Guru, Sardar Hakim Singh Ji, Ex-Speaker Lok Sabha and then President Kendri Singh Sabha published a pamphlet 'A Plan for Sikh Re-organisa-

tion' for establishing the authority of Panj Piaras at the Akal Takht. That Plan did receive very good appreciation from Sikh intellectuals who felt it a dire need of the time, to lift up the Sikh community from all aspects religious, economical, educational, social etc. But somehow it could not be put into practice mainly because its scope became too large. Now some other Sikhs, well wishers of the Panth, Prof. Harbhans Singh Ji and Sardar Man Mohan Singh Ji, President and Secretary Gurmata Parbhar Trust, along with their other colleagues of the Trust, have published in December 1987 'A revised Plan for Sikh Re-organization' limiting the scope to the main objective of establishing Shromani Panj Piaras at Akal Takht, the need for which has increased enormously by the recent painful happenings. The need is clearly felt that our highest leadership at Akal Takht Amritsar should be of such Panj Piaras as was envisaged by Guru Gobind Singh, that is they should be above petty self-interests for self and power and be ready to sacrifice their lives to uphold Dharma. If such righteous leader-

ship gets established other various matters of the Panth will become easier to be accomplished. It also uses this opportunity of understanding the high value of Sikh Ardas to sincerely appeal to the so called militant Sikhs who do the same daily Ardas but are indulging in actions which are opposite to what they pray, that they may abandon such sinful actions and help the Panth to present a true picture of the Sikhs to the world.

The success of this objective also the Gurmata Parbhar Trust now craves from God Almighty through Ardas. This Trust is trying to distribute on a large scale, copies of the revised plan mentioned above to all Sikhs in India as well as in other countries of the world. These copies can be had, free of cost from its Secretary Sardar Man Mohan Singh, 1136 Vikas Kunj, Vikas Park, New Delhi-18. The Trust also craves with all humility and sincerity the cooperation of all Sikhs in this important matter which aims at achieving pristine glory and Chardi Kala of the Panth.

# Defamation and Law

By : A.G. Noorani

The law of defamation in India is far more strict than in Britain or the United States and, perhaps, in any other democracy. The Supreme Court's rulings have been anything but indulgent to those accused of defamation. Neither the Law Commission nor the Press Commission, nor the Press Council found the law lax or inadequate. On the contrary, both the Press Commission and the Press Council have strongly recommended liberalisation of the law, not that it be made more stringent.

An almost unique feature of the Indian law is that defamation is both a tort, a civil wrong punishable in damages, and a criminal offence for which the offender can be sent to jail even on a private complaint.

The law tilts clearly in favour of the complainant. If people do not rush to courts the reason is two-fold. For the genuinely aggrieved citizen it is the delays in courts and the prohibitive legal expenses. A minister defamed faces neither of these problems. The Criminal Procedure Code has been amended to enable not only the President, Vice-President, and Governors, but a Minister, Central or State, and "any other public servant", to file a complaint straightaway in the Sessions Court and that too through the public prosecutor. That takes care of the expenses as well as the time factor. None has complained that the Sessions Courts do not set speedily on such complaints, filed under Section 193 (2) of the Code.

## Muzzling the Press

If our *ministers* do not avail themselves of the amendment, which was made mainly for their benefit, the reason is not hard to understand. The law, very few, who went to court took the step only in cases where the accused had gone out on a limb, never in regard to any of the major scandals which have figured in the Press. They preferred discretion to valour. The Bill was designed to muzzle the Press while keeping the skeletons in the cupboard secure from the judicial scrutiny which our law and every civilised law of defamation fairly permits, once matters are brought to court.

A glance at the American and the English law shows the stringency of our law. The American law confers less protection on a 'public figure', within or outside government, than on a private individual. Our law does the very opposite. Nearly a quarter century ago, the US Supreme Court ruled in the *New York Times* case that a public figure is not entitled to damages for libel unless he proves "actual malice" on the part of the defendant, that is, that the statement was made "with knowledge that it was false or with reckless disregard of whether

it was false or not".

Even so, the American Civil Liberties Union has proposed barring libel suits by public officials altogether, for any libel arising from the performance of their official duties, on the ground that to criticise the official is to criticise the government and such criticism should be absolutely protected.

## US Libel Suits

The law is not toothless, as Prof. Rodney A. Smolla's book *Suing the Press* brings out. If "the million dollars libel suits" has become the newest American status symbol, it is because people dare to go to courts and the judicial process is not so time-consuming.

There is a veritable "libel explosion" even under this extremely liberal law which has led some to regard it as "one of the greatest threats to civil liberties in America today". It has prompted Prof. Smolla to plead that the balance between free speech and reputation "should never be tilted too far against expression".

In England prosecution for the offence of "criminal libel" cannot be launched by a private individual without the leave of the Attorney-General or the Director of Public Prosecutions. Even so the offence is well on its way out of the statute book after the fiasco of the Goldsmith case a decade ago. It was always regarded as an "extraordinary remedy" and Sir Hailsham of Sturges regarded it as being violative of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights. By the same reasoning the criminal offence of defamation, defined in Section 499 of the Penal Code, would also be violative of the fundamental right to freedom of speech embodied in our Constitution.

That leaves us alone without quaint criminal remedy of damages for defamation. The civil remedy of damages for defamation is based on English law. But while the English law was reformed by a Liberal Defamation Act 1952, the Indian law remained unreformed and is being deformed by the Bill of 1988.

This brings us to the adequacy of the Indian law of defamation, civil and criminal, to protect the aggrieved and punish the guilty. First, the civil law. Nothing escapes its reach—not even a wax model, nor an effigy, film, broadcast, telecast nor skywriting by an aeroplane. Insults and taunts, no matter how cleverly worded, constitute defamation if they convey an imputation which injures the reputation of a person and hold him up to "hatred,

ridicule or contempt".

In civil law, truth by itself is a complete defence because a man is not entitled to a reputation he does not deserve. So is a fair comment on a matter of public interest. Malice and recklessness vitiate this defence, however.

The criminal law is even more stringent. Truth alone is not a defence, nor is honest conviction in the expression of opinions. Section 499 of the Penal Code which defines defamation casts its net very wide, indeed. It covers "an imputation" concerning any person intending or knowing or "having reason to believe" that it will harm his reputation. If he is a deceased person, his family can prosecute the offender. A company, firm or association or "collection of persons" can be defamed. An imputation may be expressed "ironically".

## Ten Exceptions

Section 499 lists "ten exceptions". The first is truth expressed "for the public good". A truthful statement in respect of a person's private life, for instance, will not be protected unless it was also made "for the public good". In civil law, truth alone is a defence. Not so in criminal law, ironically.

The second exception is in regard to opinion concerning "the conduct of a public servant in the discharge of his public functions, or respecting his character, so far as his character appears in that conduct". But there is a vital qualification. The opinion must be expressed in "good faith" and Section 52 of the Penal Code defines these words to mean "due care and caution". In contrast, Section 3(22) of the General Clauses Act defines "good faith" as something which "is in fact done honestly, whether it is done negligently or not".

The net result is unfair to the citizen. Statutes bar suits against Government for anything done thereunder provided it is done "in good faith", that is, honestly, even if it be done "negligently". But if the citizen expresses an opinion in "good faith" honestly alone is not enough. He is required to exercise "due care and caution" as well.

The words "good faith" occur in all the ten exceptions except the first and the fourth relating to publication of court proceedings. The Code does not protect the reckless. The third exception relates to opinion concerning "the conduct of any person touching any public question". The fifth covers opinions on court proceedings

and decisions. The seventh censure of the conduct of a subordinate. The eighth complaint to a person authorised. The tenth caution for the good of a person.

The famous ninth exception covers an imputation made in "good faith" inter alia for "the public good". The courts have to determine in each case whether it was made for the public good.

The Supreme Court has refused to lay down any "rigid rule or test". The totality of the circumstances will be considered "the nature of the imputation, the need and opportunity for verification, the situation and context in which the imputation was made", etc.

It is for the accused to plead and prove that he falls within the exceptions. The proof need not be on beyond reasonable doubt. That standard proof is for the prosecution to discharge. Still, the law requires the accused to show that he exercised some care before making the offending statement. It is a fair balance between protection of reputation and the right to freedom of speech.

In one case decided in 1981 the Supreme Court went so far as to rule that though the news story was supported by the report of an official inquiry, that itself was not proof of "good faith" and the accused had to face trials. The bench was divided (2 to 1) on the issue of quashing the complaint even in such a clear case.

It is therefore an altogether wrong notion—which the Government seeks to spread, that the law is lax and the courts are indulgent. This disinformation is in the case of press suppression.

## No Recommendation

In the wake of the Bihar Press Bill and the report of the Second Press Commission, the Press Council and the Indian Law Institute sponsored a joint study of the law of defamation by Prof. P.M. Baxi. It is entitled "Law of Defamation: Some Aspects" and was published in 1986. Appendix IV of the study lists the "recommendations of the Press Council on law of defamation" in the light of the Press Commission's report. There is not a line in the recommendations of either of these bodies which can even remotely support any of the repressive provisions of the Defamation Bill, 1988. On the contrary the Council and the Commission favour liberalisation of the existing law.

As for the genuinely aggrieved, the remedy lies in improving judicial procedures and in tackling the problem of delays. How about devising a more efficient and speedy procedure to enable the citizen to sue the State when he is defamed by official media?

Wherever one goes the questions asked are:

What is going to happen in Punjab?

Will there be no end to the unabated killing spree?

Or is terrorism in Punjab going to be long-drawn phenomenon as in some other parts of the world?

Why are the national parties silent in calling for a solution to this problem which concerns every party and threatens the unity of the country?

These questions can also be connected into one major query:

Is there any solution to the Punjab problem?

It is necessary to reflect over the situation and look at the happenings in retrospect. At the time the Barnala Government was dismissed, it was claimed that 79 deaths having taken place in a single month, the State Government had failed to control the situation, and that President's rule was the only remedy. But the subsequent developments proved beyond doubt that the situation was worsened far more since President's rule was imposed. The killing spree has increased manifold and the tally of those killed has reached a few thousands, all this in spite of the fact that many terrorists have been arrested and some top terrorists like Sukha Sipahi and Brahma have been killed.

The fact is that with the dismissal of the Barnala Government the Central Government has broken the link, however weak, which was there with the Sikh masses.

The Government, had failed after signing the accord with the late Sant Harband Singh Longowal. Though the people had responded in a big way and supported the accord, giving a massive majority to the Akali Party in the State Legislative Assembly which it never had earlier, it was the Central Government which again belied their hopes. Now again the Government is failing to utilise the anger of the people against the extremists and is relying more and more on administrative measures alone which failed to work during the last five years. The Governor of Punjab had again and again been claiming that the solution to the Punjab angle was in sight, that the Prime Minister was going to make an announcement about the political solution at an "opportune moment". But when the opportune moment will come is anybody's guess.

In view of all this the present situation can be summarised up as

## A VIEW POINT

# Tackling Punjab Crisis

By : Harkishan Singh Surjeet

follows: While the extremists are today badly isolated and there is growing hatred against them amongst the people due to various factors—killings of innocent people, extraction of money, molestation of women, exposed during and after Operation Black Thunder—there is anger against the Government too that it has continuously refused to do justice whether to the Sikhs or to Punjab. The demands specially referred to are those related to the release of Jodhpur detainees, trial of those involved in Delhi riots, and implementation of the Punjab accord.

Some three months ago when P. Chidambaram, the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, spent a number of days studying the situation in the State and held conference with district and State officials at various places, he was frankly told by all that if terrorism was to be defeated the above-mentioned measures were an urgent necessity. In a subsequent meeting called by the Governor, students from various universities also made the same plea. But it seems these opinions have no meaning for New Delhi. It is because of this that the people have not become active participants in the struggle against extremism and, whatever claims the ruling party may make, it is only the two Communist Parties—the CPI (M) and the CPI—which are carrying on a consistent, active campaign against the extremists and for a political solution to the Punjab problem. For this very reason the extremists have made them the targets of attack. The workers of these parties are carrying on this campaign at the risk of their lives, and scores of valuable leaders and cadres have already laid down their lives in defence of communal harmony and national unity.

At the same time it has to be seen that the SGPC, which has outlived its life, has a record of surrendering one position after another to the extremists. After the re-election of Gurmehar Singh Tohra as the SGPC President over the Task Force appointed by the SGPC to defend the precincts of the Golden Temple was abolished. This was an open invitation to the extremists to again entrench themselves inside the Golden Temple complex for carrying out their anti-national activities.

It was the SGPC which allowed the holding of a Sarbat Khalsa

inside the Temple and did not have the courage to come out against its authority. Even when the High Priests appointed by them had announced formation of "Khalistan" from the precincts of Golden Temple, the SGPC did not move to denounce them, and failed to draw the proper lessons when its Secretary, Abhinashi Singh, and a doctor were killed by the extremists. Instead, it went on concentrating fire against the Barnala Government and its Akali Dal which had taken a forthright stand against separatism and extremism. They made motivated use of the Akal Takht to excommunicate Barnala so that the voice of those fighting against the extremists could be stifled. No wonder then that the SGPC made itself the butt of ridicule. When the Government released Jasbir Singh Rode and four other High Priests to strike a bargain with the Bhindranwale family, AISSF and Damdami Takas, the SGPC in no time endorsed Jasbir Singh Rode as Akal Takht Chief.

Later, they dismissed him and appointed Harcharan Singh Delhi (then in prison) as the High Priest of the Akal Takht, and in his absence Mohan Singh as Acting Chief of the Akal Takht. However, after the killing of Bhain Singh, Secretary of SGPC, and Shahn Singh, Head Priest of the Golden Temple, at the hands of extremists, Mohan Singh announced that he would vacate his seat as soon as Rode was released. It was done out of fear for his life. The SGPC later dismissed him and also Harcharan Singh Delhi and re-appointed Darshan Singh Rangji as the High Priest of the Akal Takht, which job he readily accepted. Now the tussle is on Jathedar of Akal Takht.

The SGPC has thus reduced position of the High Priests to such a level that it can be used in the power game by different factions of the Akali party. Such things had never happened earlier.

Jasbir Singh Rode is now claiming that as he had been appointed by the 'Sarbat Khalsa', he is the real Jathedar of Akal Takht. He forgets that the same 'Sarbat Khalsa' had also appointed a supreme body, the 'Panthic Committee', to guide the affairs of the Panth and the same 'Panthic Committee' has denounced him.

Moreover, in legal terms, Sarbat Khalsa has no authority to

appoint or re-appoint the High Priests, this authority lies with the SGPC. The SGPC also has misused this authority, and has reduced itself to a factional body. That is why its actions cannot inspire confidence among the common people.

It is well known that the UAD was created by using the authority of the Head Priest of the Akal Takht, as a combination of various Akali groups, including the extremists. It was only the Barnala Akali Dal which refused to yield on this matter, because of which Barnala was 'ex-communicated'. But because of growing isolation of the extremists the same UAD which had the sanction of the Akal Takht has split into two factions who are now denouncing each other.

Sirmajit Singh Mann, an ex-police officer who is in jail, was nominated its president with a Presidium and a Council composed of various factions. Through his lawyer he suddenly announced dissolution of the Council and added two more names to the five-member Presidium creating a complete majority for himself. He has also extended his full support to Bhindranwale's father, Jasbir Singh Rode, and their group.

As this was not acceptable to the old leadership of the UAD like Badal, Tohra and Talwandi, they joined together. Their supporters held a meeting in Chandigarh and made the announcement about the election of Jagdev Singh Talwandi as the UAD President. Darshan Singh Rangji, who was responsible for the creation of the UAD, has come out with a statement that Sirmajit Singh Mann had no authority to dissolve the Council which was the supreme body to take the decisions. The UAD has thus split. One positive development is that the UAD under Jagdev Singh Talwandi has openly declared that they are opposed to extremism and separatism, that they are against violence and believe in peaceful methods. This undoubtedly represents the main mood.

The Akali Dal (Longowal) has also mustered fresh courage after 'Operation Black Thunder'; there are also indications that they are getting increasing support from the people. The August 20 rally on the third anniversary of Sant Harchand Singh Longowal's martyrdom, held in Longowal village, where thousands of people gathered

It is tragic that the Rajiv Gandhi Government, which came to power on the slogan of national unity, has not bothered much to defend it in the case of Punjab.

despite torrential rain, was a clear demonstration of the mass support they are getting. This support can also be gauged from the fact that no MLA or member of the SGPC belonging to the Barnala Akali Dal has deserted them and they still command the confidence of a good section of Akali ranks. But their reactions to the split in the UAD are rather hasty. They should have rather welcomed the political aspect, that of opposition to extremism and separatism, which they have been adhering to from the beginning. They have rightly given a call for unity based on the principles which the Akali Dal followed earlier, before getting affected by extremist slogans.

It is tragic that the Rajiv Gandhi Government, which came to power on the slogan of national unity, has not bothered much to defend it in the case of Punjab. They have tried many weapons to tackle the Punjab situation: it is time to review why and how they have failed. The crux of the matter is that instead of relying on the political forces, they requisitioned the services of a Jain Muni and, through him, bolstered the morale of the extremists. Subsequently, they tried to strike a bargain with Jasbir Singh Rode (naturally with a view to make use of the Bhindranwale cult which is responsible for poisoning the whole political atmosphere in the State) to evolve a solution to the Punjab problem. In doing so, the Government ignored the fact that the unity of Punjabi people can never be forged on the basis of the Bhindranwale cult.

This strategy, worked out either by RAW or some other intelligence agency, has proved fatal. I mention these intelligence agencies because I feel that no person with political comprehension would suggest such a strategy. Even when the SGPC removed Rode from the post of High Priest, the Government tried its best to presuade it. It arranged an interview with Rode in prison declaring that he continues to be the High Priest. Instead of releasing the innocent Jodhpur detainees the Government released Jasbir Singh Rode and four other High Priests on the same day as Darshan Singh Rangt was appointed High Priest of the Akal Takht by the SGPC. These measures provide grist to the mill of the extremists and give sound proof about how the

Government interferes in the internal affairs of the Sikhs.

At present the extremists have got divided into two groups—one led by the Panthic Committee and the other by Jasbir Singh Rode and his ilk. Both groups are indulging in killings and looting.

It is strange that most of the political parties in the country are looking at the Punjab problem as idle speculations. Perhaps they either feel that it is the headache of the Central Government or think that the problem concerns Punjab only. They are not able to grasp the dangerous implications of the continuous threats to the unity of the country. Rarely do they raise their voice in support of a political solution, either in Parliament or outside.

As far as the Government is concerned, it is time to rethink. If it feels that it can make use of the Punjab card in the coming elections, it is sadly mistaken. The same card cannot be used again and again. The Centre's policy of placating the extremists has proved disastrous. The policy of reliance on administrative measures alone has not been able to put an end to terrorism. The Government is losing precious time. With a proper political approach to the Punjab tangle it can still rally widest possible support. Demonstration has to be done, between those who stand against separatism and extremist and for national unity, and those who are opposed to it. The extremists are already isolated from the mass of the people.

What is needed is to take steps to inspire confidence in the people so that they become active participants in the struggle against extremism. These measures are not new. They are being echoed by all political forces in the country. They are: (1) immediate release of the innocent Jodhpur detainees, (2) trial of those who have been dubbed responsible for the Delhi riots in the Misra Commission report, (3) solution of the Chhatisgarh, water and territorial disputes within the framework of the Rajiv-Longowal accord.

If taken in time, these steps will bring about a radical change in the situation and the Government will not have the need to play out bombing operations for different areas. People themselves will take the initiative and not allow extremists to operate.

## Prime Minister urged to repeal "draconian laws"

Harminder Singh Sandhu's open letter to Prime Minister

The detained All-India Sikh Students Federation general secretary, Harminder Singh Sandhu has urged the Prime Minister to declare a general amnesty to ease the tension in Punjab.

Sandhu, under detention in the Jodhpur Central Jail since June 1984 has made the plea in an open letter to Mr Rajiv Gandhi.

The AISSF leader's 17-page letter is most hard-hitting against the Centre in general and Mr Rajiv Gandhi in particular. Sandhu who was arrested from the Golden Temple during Operation Blue Star is one of the move-idealoguees of the militant movement. He was one of the members of the Kitchen Cabinet of Bhindranwale from 1982 until Operation Blue Star.

While lodged in the Jodhpur jail along with 330 others (40 of them were released in March this year), the AISSF general secretary who is 32 did his post-graduation in history as a private candidate from the Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar last year and won a gold medal. Now he is doing his doctorate in history from the same university.

In his letter to the Prime Minister, Sandhu has extensively quoted Gandhiji, Pandit Nehru and Tagore. He has also quoted the Chinese philosopher Confucius besides a number of other foreign scholars and writers.

Sandhu's letter is accompanied by a forwarding note by Virendra Singh Valtora, office secretary of the AISSF also lodged in the Jodhpur jail.

Sandhu has urged the Prime Minister to "adequately rehabilitate and compensate" the victims of the November riots and the Army deserters during Operation Blue Star. He also wants all the Sikhs "linguishing in jails" to be released immediately.

The AISSF leader has also urged the Prime Minister to repeal all the "draconian laws", enforced in Punjab. The CRPF should be withdrawn and the ban on the entry of foreigners to the troubled State lifted. The State repression in Punjab should stop and the Government should drop the beautification plan of the Golden Temple. "The corridor plan is a vicious military scheme to make the Golden Temple vulnerable for future operations by security forces", Shelve this plan he says.

The AISSF leader has hinted that his organisation along with the militant Damdami Taksal and a section of the militant Unified Akali Dal led by Mr Simranjit Singh Mann would be ready to have a dialogue with the Centre provided the steps suggested by him were first taken by the Prime Minister.

Nowhere in his long letter has the AISSF leader mentioned the demand for Khalistan.

The letter is most critical of the Prime Minister. At one place it says: "you claim to be the champion of secularism, democracy and saviour of the oppressed people of the world but your treatment to the minorities in India is in sharp contrast to your declared intentions".

"Operation Blue Star was the culminating point of anti-Sikh politics of the Indian Government. But instead of rectifying this Himalayan blunder of your mother, you chose to follow her communal and discriminatory legacy all the more doggedly. So far as the trust of the Sikhs and their affiliation to Indian system and set-up is concerned, the November, 1984 riots proved to be the last straw on the back of the proverbial camel", he says.

The AISSF leader has accused the Prime Minister of being "a hypocrite" in his national and foreign policy citing examples of Nagaland, Mizoram and Sri Lanka at length.

"In the present political thinking and content of the struggle, the Sikhs have been left with only one option of armed struggle as your Government has sealed all the channels of democratic and peaceful agitation", he says.

Sandhu has concluded his letter by quoting the Janata Party leader, Mr Chandra Shekhar who had observed: "If the Sikhs are unhappy, India cannot be happy, if the Sikhs are liquidated, India cannot survive".

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# Three Language Formula

By : Rajwant Singh Rana

Professor N.C. Prashar a Congress(I) M.P. from Himachal Pradesh has urged the Central Government to take immediate steps to formulate a national policy on Indian Languages to ensure its implementation during the Eight plan period keeping in view Article 29 of the Constitution which guarantees preservation and promotion of every Indian Language.

He also stressed that a well defined, coherent and comprehensive policy on India's Languages was formulated by the Government in consultation with State Governments, Organisations championing the cause of regional and classical languages, the States Academies and writers and linguists.

Professor N.C. Prashar has to raise this point as a special mention under rule 377 in Lok Sabha on 30th August 1988 as he seems to have felt that the preservation and promoting of all the languages have not been properly undertaken by the agencies of the Government and some languages such as Manipuri, Koshali, Maithili, Pahari of Himachal and Khasi of Meghalaya are not included in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution, so they are not entitled to get the same treatment which is being given to the other languages, included in the Eight Schedule.

As a matter of fact, there seems to be no decided policy of the Central Government with regard to the languages, but new propositions/ideas are being propounded by the bureaucrats to give reply to the pressing need of the time.

An instance may be quoted about the three language formula which is published to be implemented in the current year in the schools run by Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan by the Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi, and the same will be put into practice in the next academic year i.e. 1989-90.

Though this formula relates to the Educational Institutions yet it is the basic one which would basically influence the minds of the students, who will get instruction in the concerned languages.

Our country is a multi-lingual one and it needs the proper national policy to teach the languages in accordance with the needs of the students and the day.

To impose the teaching of languages which could not be the base of their day to day activities relating to all the aspects of the life, would be harmful and useless.

To my mind the first place should be given to the mother

tongue of the students, which ever it is or where ever he is. If the mother tongue is other than the State Language then also the instructions be provided in the mother tongue upto the primary level, the second language in such cases be the State Language, and the third language should be any language, modern Indian Language, classical language or the foreign language.

The unnecessary stress being given in our Educational Policy seems to be suicidal and contrary to the national integration, harmony and unity of the country.

The three language formula as enunciated by the Central Board of Secondary Education, the third language will be taught from 7th to 10th class and the standard of this teaching would be equal to the 6th class of the State where this language is being taught as first language and the number of languages which will be taught in Hindi States, is restricted to only from languages like Malayalam, Tamil, Bengali and Gujarati, meaning thereby the Northern languages such as Punjabi, Kashmiri, Urdu and Eastern Languages will have not any place in the scheme of studies in the State where the Hindi is the State Language.

It is disclosed that all schools in Haryana will teach Telugu as the third language and this policy decision has already been taken by the Lok Dal-Bharatiya Janata Party Ministry, although lot of Punjabi speaking people are residing there and their language will not have any place in the scheme of studies.

Similar situation could be anticipated in Himachal, Jammu and Kashmir, Union Territory of Delhi, where Punjabi Language is being taught in the schools for the last many years. This will create language problem which should be avoided at the present state of the country.

It seems that Hindi language is being promoted at the cost of other languages, as the three language formula, which is going to be implemented seems to have a compromise between the Hindi States and the Southern States. The Hindi States will teach the four languages as stated above and the States where those languages are State languages will teach Hindi, to implement the unofficial accord reached at, under the garb of the three language formula.

It is very strange that some of the minority run trust schools following the Central Board of Secondary Board pattern have decided to teach their mother tongue as the third language. Such a stand will harm all the other minority languages and will

complicate the language problem of the country.

We also endorse the thoughts as propounded by Professor N.C. Prashar when he states: the classical language like Sanskrit, Pali, Persian and widely spoken language Urdu found their future uncertain on account of occasional shifts on emphasis on language study to other more lucrative subject groups in the educational system. The three—Language for-

mula had been interpreted in many "convenient ways" by State Governments. Some resistance to Hindi still continues, and we request the Educationists/Linguistics—authorities to discuss this problem keeping in view the betterment of the future generations and in the interest of the country as a whole, to safeguard against the language agitations.

## Hard Decisions Wanted

By : Parnal Saran

Economic scene of India today is disturbing. So is the political.

This is no mere coincidence. The latter is the cause of the former.

Discussion of economic issues cannot be fruitful if attempted in isolation.

Better to enumerate the pressing problems looming on the economic horizon.

The number of educated job seekers has increased in a baffling proportion. It was 51 lakhs in 1970; it rose to 2 crores 63 lakhs in 1985. Those who are not even S.S.C. and are unemployed or underemployed are not being enumerated systematically. Commonsense suggests that their number must be more than that of the educated unemployed.

In 1931 population was 76.1 crores. In 2000 it is estimated to be more than 98.6 crores. The foodgrains requirements would rise up to 23 crore tons. The production figures for 1985-87 are around 14 crore tons. Cannot be doubled within a short span of twelve years.

Unemployment situation would aggravate still further.

Cost of living index for industrial workers in Bombay has shot up from 100 in 1960-61 to 782 in 1987-88. But for foodgrains, all other items included in the labourers' consumption basket have become exorbitantly costly. Perversion have crept in, yes. Colour TVs are plenty even in slum areas. Sale of intoxicants is rising steeply. But the fact remains that nutritious food has gone beyond reach of the toiling masses. Books have become terribly expensive.

Planning process is in doldrums for twofold reasons.

Rules in Delhi concentrated too much power in their hands. Even a scheme for drinking water supply for a village of say, 1000 souls requires approval of Delhi. Files of irrigation schemes are pending for decades. Recently, the Prime Minister has started talking about district level planning and Panchayati Raj. But he does so while addressing collectors and district magistrates and not political activists. People are losing faith in the planning

process.

Second cause is the financial mismanagement of the Central Government. Public debt liabilities have increased from Rs. 11,327 crores in 1965-66 to Rs. 1,62,761 crores in 1986-87. Naturally debt services are claiming a large share in the central revenues. Non-plan, non-development expenditure on other items is also galloping. Consequently, funds allocated in the seventh five year plan for various developmental schemes could not, in practice, be made available. Rate of growth has slowed down. And quantum of deficit financing is increasing by leaps and bounds. That triggers off chain reaction of increasing cost of living and of increasing distress allowance. Another major item of non-plan, non-development expenditure.

What are the solutions?

Economists have suggested various prescriptions. Effective ones can be easily elected from amongst them.

But who is going to administer them?

Not the Congress-I, the party at the helm of affairs at the Centre and majority of the states.

Not the major opposition parties. They are bogged down in the interminable process of mergers and of evolving 'national alternative'.

Then who?

The situation is not quite hopeless. There are a large number of angry youths. Some of them are organised in stray action groups. Others are not. But they are there waiting to do something to set right the things in the country.

What is urgently needed is a movement. Not short-lived and short-sighted agitation, but a determined movement that would mobilise all these angry, which decides not to engage in electioneering for at least ten years to come, youths will flock to it in great numbers.

Utopia?

Yes.

But basic transformations cannot be brought about without a utopia.

Let us nurture one. Let us try to translate it into reality.

## Prime Minister urged to solve Punjab issue

The veteran CPI (M) leader, Sardar Harkishan Singh Surjeet, has urged the Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, to make an announcement of specific steps towards a political solution, in addition to the economic package already hinted at.

In a open letter to the Prime Minister, the CPI (M) politburo member Sardar Harkishan Singh Surjeet said that while everybody would undoubtedly welcome any step taken towards the economic development of the State, it would be wrong to think that the Punjab problem could be solved by such announcements of economic proposals alone. The people of Punjab expect from you something else, which would put an end to the most critical situation they are faced with—helious killings of the innocent, people living in the grip of fear and duty risk to their lives, Sardar Surjeet's letter said.

### Suggestions to P.M.

He noted that a broad consensus had evolved about the need to find a political solution. 'I therefore earnestly request you that along with the economic package you have in mind, you also avail yourself of the opportunity to announce—the release of the innocent Jodhpur detainees without any further delay, the trial of all those who have been named in the Mishra Commission report as being responsible for organising the November 1984 riots, a decision about Chandigarh, the water and the territorial dispute within the framework of the Rajiv-Longowal accord.'

Such an announcement would have a 'galvanising effect not only on the people of the State but throughout the country, making it extremely difficult for the extremists to find shelter anywhere. Keeping in mind the interests of the nation and bearing in mind that the higher interests of the country must get priority over the narrow partisan interests of a political party', the CPI(M) leader said, the Prime Minister should ponder these suggestions. 'Unless you announce these steps during your visit to Punjab, the trip will not be successful in advancing towards a solution to the grave problem in the State.'

Sardar Surjeet regretted that the administration appeared to be content with what was at present being done to tackle the Punjab problem. The Government, he said, had repeatedly made claims that the situation was changing for the better. Yet a look at the statistics would show that during 15 months and 15 days of the

present regime terrorists had taken a toll as many as 2,164 lives. 'What one fails to understand is on what basis the administration expresses contentment about the law and order situation in the State.'

### Missed opportunity

Although Operation Black Thunder 'did much to expose the extremists and generated a wave of hatred against them for their anti-national activities', the Government had 'failed to make good use of the situation'. Today, although there was great anger among the people against the extremists, there was also a 'deep sense of anger against the Central Government' which had 'failed to do justice to the people' and had not been able to fulfil its own pledges. The Punjab Accord still remained unimplemented. 'All this angers the people and it is utilised by the extremists.'

Noting that there was no dearth of patriotism in Punjab, Sardar Surjeet said that these feelings could be evoked even today, if irritants like the non-implementation of the provisions of the Accord, the failure to release the Jodhpur detainees and the failure to punish the culprits of the November 1984 riots were removed. 'Once the people come into action, no extremists will be able to operate, even with the help of the foreign countries as they are doing today.'

### Security risk

On the other hand, if the present situation was allowed to continue it might have dangerous repercussions for the whole of India.

## Gen Aurora's plea to P.M

Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora, a Rajya Sabha member, in a letter to the Prime Minister has said the present situation in Punjab has to be tackled with patience and determination. The problem can be solved only if the Prime Minister and his Government gains moral ascendancy over the militants and wins the confidence and cooperation of the people by fair, just and sympathetic means.

## FAIR REPRESENTATION ON PUNJABI ACADEMY DEMANDED

Kondri Sahitya Sammelan has demanded representation for those literary organisations which are striving for the promotion of Punjabi language and literature, through nomination to the Governing Body of Punjabi Academy. It is felt that such representations will give democratic character to the Academy, set up by the Delhi Administration for the promotion of Punjabi language, literature and culture.

It has also been demanded that those members who have enjoyed one term on the Governing Body need not be re-nominated for the second term to be fair to other scholars and organisations.

The Sammelan also points out that part-time Punjabi teachers have been appointed to meet the requirement of language teachers in the Schools, but these being untrained ones, will affect the standard of language teachers.

It has been pointed out that certain employees of Delhi Administration evince interest in literature and cultural activities. Such persons need encouragement and patronage by the Academy.

## Punjab Newsletter

## Centre approves Pepsi deal for Punjab

By : Bhupinder Singh, Chandigarh  
After three years of dilly-dallying, the Government formally approved the Pepsi project, a trilateral venture of the Punjab Agro Industries Corporation, Volta, a Tata Company and the U.S. based PepsiCo.

The decision to approve the Rs. 22-crore food processing and soft drink venture was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs when it also cleared some major proposals, including those relating to the entire range of food processing industries and placing them on Appendix I of the Industries and Development Regulation Act. Thus MRIP and PERA companies will now be eligible to enter this area of economic activity.

According to well-placed sources, the Government has imposed a 50 percent export obligation on the total turnover of the company. Nearly 74 per cent of the venture will be fruit and vegetable related and the balance would constitute the soft drink component. The sources said while PepsiCo which had similar ventures in the Soviet Union and China with an export-import ratio of 1:1, the Punjab based project will, however, have an export obligation of five times the import element.

In a press release in New Delhi last week Dr. S.S. Johl, Chairman of the Union Government's Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, has stated that the approval of the Pepsi project by the "Prime Minister is indeed very heartening."

The Janata Party leader, Mr. George Fernandes, in a statement, said that some of the Prime Minister's "associates involved in the controversial Pepsi Cola deal have been interacting with a non-resident Indian agent hired by Pepsi Cola." The agent, according to the statement, is based in New York.

Among the other points made in the statement are: 'All the talk of Pepsi setting up export-oriented food processing units in Punjab as part of the overall contract is so much nonsense. First, we do not need any technology for food processing. Secondly, assuming that we need it, there are innumerable better known, food processors in Europe and America willing to come without soft carbonated drinks strings attached. I also learn that the only food processing Pepsi Cola will be involved in is packaging.'



## OUR READERS WRITE

## Religious Institutions Bill

Direct interference in the  
Sikh way of life

The Religious Institutions (Preventive of Mis-use) Bill, 1988 strikes at the very foundation of the Sikh Religion. The Sikh Religion was founded by Guru Gobind Singh about 300 years back and it was ordained that a Sikh was to be a "Sant Sipahi" meaning thereby that a Sikh has not only to be a devout Religionist, but also a soldier implying his duties towards the country.

While founding the Sikh Religion at Anandpur Sahib the great Guru had not only removed the discrimination on the basis of caste and creed by including the members of various castes and communities in Panj Piaras but as a democrat gave full powers to the "Sangat" (Sikh congregation) to take decisions on such matters, whether political, religious, social, economic etc. pertaining to the Sikh community. The verdict of Sikh Sangat was binding on the Guru himself. For a Sikh the orders issued by Akal Takht, which is the highest temporal seat of the Sikhs are final and have to be obeyed without question. Guru Hargobind, the 6th Guru of the Sikhs, had introduced the principle of "Miri and Piri" (temporal and spiritual) and founded the great Institution of Siri Akal Takht, which was to be the highest temporal seat of the Sikhs. This was the basic tenet of Sikh Dharma and no wonder that all major decisions affecting the Sikh community, whether religious, political or social were invariably taken after full discussions and consideration at Siri Akal Takht. It is a common knowledge that when the freedom struggle was on, the Sikh community which made predominant sacrifices in the cause, invariably took inspiration from Siri Akal Takht and launched its agitations after "Ardas" (prayers) at Siri Akal Takht.

As a matter of fact the Sikh way of life does not admit of the idea of separation of religion from politics. Both of them are so intermingled that one cannot be divorced from the other without striking at the root of the Sikh faith. Today's rulers cannot feign ignorance of the fact that various Movements against Britishers by the Sikh community were launched and continued from Gurdwaras generally and Siri Akal Takht particularly. The said principles of inseparability from politics on which the Sikh

faith was founded was never questioned but was rather applauded expressly and impliedly by Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and other distinguished leaders of the country.

It is also on record that Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and other political leaders of the country had addressed Sikh Sangats in Gurdwaras on political matters not once but as a routine during the freedom struggle and even thereafter. Can any body forget the supreme sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur which was a political defence against the then rulers to save Hindu dharma.

According to the Sikh philosophy, politics completely divorced from religion will go astray and ultimately lead to degeneration. The religion which teaches compassion, mercy, honesty, brotherhood etc., has to be the guiding force in the politics and the states run by the God fearing rulers, as distinguished from fanaticism, will be ideal States. The main objections of the Sikhs against the aforesaid legislation is that it runs counter to the basic principles of the Sikh religion, and the implications of the term "Manager", "political activity", "harbouring", "Religious Institutions" are so wide and fraught with so much risk of harassment, humiliation and torture by the police, that no respectable and peaceful person would like to accept the post of 'Manager' of a Gurdwara without a risk to his own peace and reputation. The Sikh Gurdwaras are the Institutions where everybody irrespective of his faith, creed, caste, etc. is welcomed day and night and served with food at larger (community kitchen) and given shelter in the premises. The Manager shall always be exposed to the danger of being hauled up by police for 'harbouring' and serving food to some one who was wanted by the police in some case. The Manager will have no means to screen and detect him out of hundreds and thousands who come to the Gurdwaras and partake in "langar" every day. The implications are simply unthinkable. Perhaps the police and the Government will not permit a political party of the Sikhs to go Siri Akal Takht and pray before launching their party or taking some major decisions.

It is an established principle that the Government cannot

change the customs and habits of the people or their religious faith by just passing a law by the Legislature. Any improvement in the customs, habits, religious view point etc. can be brought about only by education and through goodwill but certainly not suddenly by way of passing a law. Such a law will be honoured more in its breach rather than in observance.

The million dollar question which arises today for consideration is as to what has happened now which has poisoned the entire atmosphere and the Government has resorted to a very harsh measure which tends to attack the very foundation of Sikh faith and is sure to give a fatal blow to the authority of Siri Akal Takht from where the Sikhs have always been seeking inspiration for their contribution in the matters pertaining to political, social, secular and international brotherhood for which they are known all over the world.

From what has been happening for the last about 3 years, a common Sikh has started thinking as if various measures taken by the Government in Punjab culminating in passing the religious Institution (Prevention of Mis-use) Bill, 1988 are designed to finish the Sikh religion itself. Those who have read the history and have even an elementary knowledge of Sikh Religion will appreciate that in the Sikh way of life, it is absolutely impossible to divorce the politics from Religion and if this is done, what is left of Sikh faith and various Sikh institutions including Siri Akal Takht, is better to be understood rather than explained.

In our humble view the treatment being given by the Government is like climbing the patient rather than treating the ailment. The Government, it appears, has refused to diagnose the actual cause of the malice otherwise it would not have been difficult to provide the treatment which would be efficacious under the given circumstances. The Government had been taking harsh measures one after the other and aggravating the situation of the fact that the said thoughtless actions were alienating the entire community. The Operation Blue Star in which Tanks, Helicopters and Machine Guns were used to liquidate just one person and some of his followers, was ordered without caring for the sentiments of the entire Sikh community. The said operation was followed by Operation Wood Rose which further aggravated the fresh wounds of Operation Blue Star.

This was not all, the action of the Government in propping up Baba Santa Singh to repair

the damaged building of Siri Akal Takht under the protection of Army Jawans march against the wishes of Sikh Community in general added fuel to the fire.

The massacre of Sikhs in Delhi and elsewhere, burning of hundreds of Gurdwaras and looting, destruction of property worth crores, after the sad and unfortunate assassination of the then Prime Minister followed by hesitation of the Government to bring the culprits to book, resulted in complete alienation of the Sikh community. Under the circumstances the angry Sikh Youth lost its equilibrium and took up the arms which is certainly against the Sikh tenets to tackle such matters. The feeble voice of Khalistan became a cry of Sikh Youths and without any exaggeration it can be said that the said cry was the result of wrong policies being adopted by the Central Government which had been rubbing salt on the wounds of the Sikhs rather than applying a healing touch.

It is an admitted fact that the Sikhs are not in favour of Khalistan. The slogan of Khalistan to other mind, is raised by angry Sikh Youth to abuse the Government which has mercilessly been trying to suppress, humiliate and kill the Sikh Youths in fake encounters.

Recent legislation will prove a last straw on the camel's back, because it will give handle to local policemen to go on harassing and humiliating those who are in charge of Sikh Institutions. The implications of the Bill are so wide and varied that it will be impossible to keep up the Sikh 'Maridars' as also to permit the Sikhs to follow the Sikh way of life as dictated by the great Guru.

The aforesaid Bill can be taken to be a direct interference in the Sikh way of life which has been ordained by the founders of the Sikh religion. A common Sikh feels that the Government in its anxiety and wisdom to defuse the situation in Punjab, should have been able to apply a healing touch rather than bringing these harsh measures which will rather rub salt on the lacerated wounds of the Sikhs and will further add fuel to the fire. The Government should have been advised to take political initiatives to tackle the situation and the objectives desired to be achieved by the aforesaid bill could have been achieved with providing further provocation to the Sikh Youth. It seems the Government has not learnt any lesson. With a view to liquidate a few persons the Government resorted to Operation Blue Star, which injured the sentiments of entire Sikh

community. Similarly, with a view to keep some unwanted elements out of Gurdwara the Government has brought about a Bill which will most probably not be accepted by the Sikh Community at large. From what has happened it appears that either the Government is not honest in its attempt to bring about peace in Punjab or its advisers are not fully conversant with the history of Punjab generally and Sikhs particularly and are thus tendering wrong advice to the Government which is proving counter-productive.

We will be failing in our duty if we do not condemn the activities of some young-men who have taken to arms against our own country, instead of getting their grievances redressed through constitutional means. They may be against the actions of the Government and they may like to change the Government also, but they cannot think of damaging the interests of the country as a whole. The activities of the secessionists are certainly against the interests of the country for the independence of which our fore-fathers have made tremendous and innumerable sacrifices. The Government may be said to be against the interests of the Sikhs but the country as a whole is on the side of the genuine demands of the Sikh community. There is no dearth of Jethmalanis, Madhu Dasdevates, N.T. Ra., Chandrasekhars and a large number of others, who have constantly been voicing the sentiments of the Sikh community in the press, platform and parliament.

The Sikh Youth are, therefore, advised to abandon the path of violence and adopt constitutional measures for redressal of their genuine grievances. This will not only win over the sympathy of our countrymen but will almost certainly enable them to achieve their goal. It is a pity that a Sikh who is supposed to be a saviour of innocents and down-trodden is today being labelled as terrorist and killer of innocents.

Those who call themselves as Sikhs have to obey the teachings of their Gurus and desist from committing crimes no matter how grave the provocation is. However, the bill being machievous and dangerous to the over-all interests of the country is condemned, as such, and must be rejected by all.

—B.S. Meisen, Advocate

New Delhi

—Lt. Col. Mandeep Singh (Retd.)  
New Delhi

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## A 30 YEAR SUCCESS STORY

### Binatone the acknowledged innovative market leader

What began, in 1958 in England, with a small breakthrough in the English electronics market, is today making its presence felt in the challenging international arena. A 30 year success story, which not only established Binatone International as Britain's single largest independent electronics company, but also as a joint-venture, spanning the entire globe with factories and R & D centres. Its products selling in 50 countries worldwide.

Despite stiff competition from international giants, Binatone achieved many a breakthrough. Introducing England's first pocket transistor radio—a runaway success; the first truly portable TV—a remarkable innovation that one could use anywhere; the popular TV games that captured more than 75% of the English market; England's first tower concept in Audio Systems; the recently launched Hi-Fi System with CD as an unbeatable and of course the impossible when Binatone's personal stereo 'Hip-Fi' beat Sony's invention—'Walkman'. Far outwitting it in the English Market!

These series of successes have made Binatone a popular household name in electronics in Europe. A recent survey revealed the startling fact that 1 out of every 4 houses in England owns a Binatone product.

#### In Japan and USA

Recently Binatone entered the home of modern electronics—Japan. Its highly advanced Hi-Fi systems are marketed in Japan through a Japanese Company. Binatone also entered another highly quality conscious market—U.S.A. Tequest, a major distributor in the U.S.A., will be marketing Binatone's sophisticated push button telephones.

Manufacturing and R & D resource has always been Binatone's strength. Today it is the proud owner of one of Europe's largest manufacturing complexes—the fully computerised Milton Keynes Complex in Central England.

Never losing sight of the global perspective, Binatone set up R & D offices at key centres of electronic innovations like Japan, Hong Kong, Korea and Taiwan. Through these offices, Binatone is able to keep pace with the latest technologies and developments. Thereby, continuously maintaining a lead in the international electronics market. Including such highly advanced, quality conscious markets like France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Scandinavia and U.S.A. among others.

#### Cancer Research

Binatone has always extended its support to causes that help people in England, it sponsored the Round Britain and Ireland Race—a popular Yacht race in support of the Cancer Research Campaign. This event raised as much as Rs. 5,00,000! The Cancer Research Campaign is the largest supporter of research into cancer in the United Kingdom.

Binatone arranged a Procelebrity tennis tournament in aid of muscular dystrophy a disease characterized by progressive weakening and wasting of muscles. Many Wimbledon personalities like Vijay Amritraj, John Lloyd, James Hunt and others participated in this match organised by John Mc Hare. The money raised (Rs. 6,25,000) was presented to the President of The Muscular Dystrophy Association, Mr Richard Attenborough, the famed director of the film 'Gandhi'.

With a promise to bring the latest technology and value for money in consumer electronics to the Indian consumer, Binatone in a remarkable short span of 3 years, has become a household name in India too. Today, its exclusive range of Black and White and Colour TVs and Hi-Fi systems sell out of one of the most sophisticated complexes in the country.

#### Commitment to Quality

A phenomenal success in just 3 years in India, Binatone credits this fact to its constant effort in maintaining international standards in quality. The latest computerised equipment powers only 100% perfect products, eliminating the possibility of human error. These stringent quality control measures conform to the highest European standards—one of most stringent in the world, today.

Developed by Binatone's inhouse R & D in Tokyo, this technology is today built into every Binatone Colour TV. To give an unmatched picture clarity and stunning depth of colours. Binatone is now bringing this unique technology to every home in India through Quartz. A friendly alien from outer space, Quartz will feature in all Binatone promotional and advertising campaigns.

At Binatone, quality goes in before its name goes on. And training will make use of it. That's why it has one of the most broad-based training programmes in India today. The underlying

objective is two-fold. To improve technical know-how of its personnel. And to instill in its employees a pride and interest in their jobs.

#### Nationwide After Sales

The consumer always comes first which is why Binatone set up the most extensive and efficient after-sales service network in the country. Appropriately named 'Mastercare'. Reaching the furthest corners of the country, Mastercare has 74 regional controlling centres, manned by highly qualified engineers and technicians. 'Mastercare' launched a massive consumer care exercise called 'Operation Consumer Satisfaction'. Hundreds of its specially trained service engineers traversed the country, servicing Binatone TV free. Highlighting the importance of preventive maintenance to its customers. And proving that Binatone really cares.

In keeping with the Government of India's emphasis on electronics exports, Binatone in India has now set its sights on the export market. Armed with the same expertise and know-how of Binatone International, it is fully geared to meet the challenge of a highly competitive global market. The Exports Division is constantly identifying potential markets. Building trade bridges which will carry Binatone products from India to the far corners of the world.

Just over two years ago, Binatone supplied several dozens of Colour TVs to the New Delhi Railway Station.

Exposed to the toughest weather conditions and vibrations of hundreds of trains day and night, the Binatone Colour TVs have come out of the ordeal with flying colours. Proving that Binatone TVs are built with that extra bit of care that makes them last.

For the last three years, Binatone has been sponsoring the I.M.M. Young Electronic Engineers Award. This Award aims at promoting excellence in consumer electronics and giving talented young engineers the recognition they deserve.

#### New Products

Binatone in India has recently launched new TV models—the View Master, a monitor look Black and White TV set and the on-screen display Colour TV set.

Binatone also plans to launch other exciting consumer electronic products like Push Button Telephones, a new range in Audio Systems and Computers etc. Binatone is geared to meet the challenges of growing India. It is setting up other manufacturing units at Bombay, Noida and Nainital.

The glittering 30 years are history. Binatone looks forward to its glorious future.

# Normal Crimes Also Being Trotted About As Handiwork Of Extremists

## Acts Of Violence Increasing During President's Rule

Since 1982 when militancy raised its ugly head in Punjab, police officials took to the craze of lumping normal crime with extremist activities.

It was much simpler for them to ascribe a murder to "unidentified terrorists", as this spared them bother of conducting a thorough investigation and nabbing the real culprits. Often corrupt station house officers took bribes to shield the murderers and put their crime into terrorist category.

Now the police headquarters in Chandigarh has woken up from its deep slumber and realised that murders over land, water and women have been part of everyday life in Punjab since ages and all of them could not disappear suddenly without any rhyme or reason. The SHO's have now been asked to disaggregate normal crime and show it up in a separate chart.

This has helped differentiate between the two trends which show that while normal crime is on the rise, there has been marked decline in extremist activities, especially after Operation Black Thunder in May last.

This is borne out by latest

Statistics. In August, 30 persons were murdered for "normal reasons"; the figures for July were 44 and for June 43 murders. Of course, the police districts of Tarn Taran and Majitha continue to be the epicentre of extremist activities where 80 to 90 percent of killings were done by extremists. But in other districts, the trend is just the opposite.

For instance, in Hoshiarpur district, extremists were responsible for four out of 10 murders in June, two out of four in July and none out of four in August. We must remember that 70 percent of extremist turmoil has been confined to Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts.

The crime figures also blast the centre's theory that the Barnala ministry has to be dismissed, as it had failed to tackle the extremist menace properly. During 19 months of Akali rule, 816 persons, including 73 policemen, were killed but in 15 months of president's rule 1,995 persons have been gunned down by extremists.

Of course, police activity has been on the rise. During the Barnala period, 130 extremists were killed but 510 extremists were eliminated under president's rule between May 11 last year and August 31 this year. Police encounters have also increased from 193 under Akali to 636 under the central rule.

Much of the crime in Punjab these days, according to Police Director-General Gill, is "aggravated gangsterism." He feels that "motivation for crime has changed," with earlier commitment to secessionism and fanaticism ebbing away. Recruitment to extremist ranks has also shown a downward trend. The flow of money to them has registered a slump. After their sacrilege of the Golden Temple, exposed during May last, extremists have lost popular support among Sikhs.

But this does not mean that the bump has been crossed in the fight against militancy, as extremists have still the capacity to strike at will. The next few months shall be very crucial. How far is the light at the end of the tunnel is still not known.

## BIDAR CARNAGE

(Continued from page 1)

strongly-worded statements and asked for protection to Sikhs.

In a press statement issued in Amritsar, the SGPC accused the Union government of having instigated the Bidar carnage as a part of a deep rooted conspiracy to oust Janta party from power in Karnataka. The carnage, it said had reopened the wounds inflicted in November 1984.

Several delegations of Sikhs from various states have called on Karnataka Chief Minister Bommai who has sent two of his ministers to the town. He has promised full protection to Sikh students studying there.

Karnataka Industries Minister J. H. Patel, after a visit to Bidar tried to take shelter behind welter of words. He said: "The violence was against Sikhs but the riot was not anti-Sikh."

Can you make any head or tail out of this jargon?

His argument was that riots were "unfortunate, sporadic and accidental" where anti-social elements took an upper hand and had a field day.

If anti-social elements were really guilty, then how is that only Sikhs were assaulted and only their houses, shops and institutions were burnt?

The state government has conceded the demand for a judicial enquiry by a high court judge. But more important than the inquiry report will be the follow-up action if honours has to be taught to the erring elements.]

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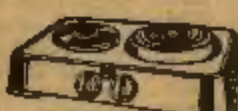
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